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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/602,922	06/23/2000	Guy O. Bargnes	0906S-000267	1038

26922 7590 04/25/2003

BASF CORPORATION  
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SOUTHFIELD, MI 48034-2442

EXAMINER

MEINECKE DIAZ, SUSANNA M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

DATE MAILED: 04/25/2003

8

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**37 CFR § 1.105 - Requirement for Information**

1. Applicant and the assignee of this application are required under 37 CFR 1.105 to provide the following information that the examiner has determined is reasonably necessary to the examination of this application.

The information is required to identify products and services embodying the disclosed subject matter of tracking various business metrics associated with a shop, such as a shop specializing in collision repair, and identify the properties of similar products and services found in the prior art. In response to this requirement, please provide the names of any products or services that have incorporated the claimed subject matter. For example, the Examiner has come across an article that discloses BASF's (i.e., the assignee's) VisionPlus Online (VPOL) business analysis tools (please see attached article, "Help Via the Web"). The Examiner requests information regarding VisionPlus Online, including its earliest date of disclosure to the public and who created it. If its earliest date of disclosure to the public occurred more than one year prior to Applicant's filing date (June 23, 2000), it is also requested that Applicant provide details of VisionPlus Online's features and a comparison of these features to the claimed invention.

Additionally, BASF provided "value-added service offerings under a banner known as VisionPlus" as early as August 1996 (please see attached article, "Paint Company Value-Added Programs & Services"). Please provide details of the features of VisionPlus and any related services/products offered by BASF more than one year prior to Applicant's filing date of June 23, 2000. Also, in response to this requirement,

Art Unit: 3623

please state the specific improvements of the claimed invention over VisionPlus and any related services/products offered by BASF more than one year prior to Applicant's filing date of June 23, 2000 and indicate the specific elements in the claimed subject matter that provide those improvements.

2. The fee and certification requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.97 are waived for those documents submitted in reply to this requirement. This waiver extends only to those documents within the scope of this requirement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.105 that are included in the applicant's first complete communication responding to this requirement. Any supplemental replies subsequent to the first communication responding to this requirement and any information disclosures beyond the scope of this requirement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.105 are subject to the fee and certification requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.97.

The applicant is reminded that the reply to this requirement must be made with candor and good faith under 37 CFR 1.56. Where the applicant does not have or cannot readily obtain an item of required information, a statement that the item is unknown or cannot be readily obtained will be accepted as a complete response to the requirement for that item.

***Conclusion***

3. This requirement is subject to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.134, 1.135 and 1.136 and has a shortened statutory period of two months. EXTENSIONS OF THIS TIME PERIOD MAY BE GRANTED UNDER 37 CFR 1.136(a).

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (703) 305-1337. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (703) 305-9643.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-1113.

Effective May 1, 2003, any response to this action should be mailed to:

**Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450**


or faxed to:


**(703)305-7687** [Official communications; including  
After Final communications labeled  
"Box AF"]

**(703)746-7048** [Informal/Draft communications, labeled  
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Art Unit: 3623

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 22202, 7<sup>th</sup> floor receptionist.

  
Susanna M. Diaz  
Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 3623  
April 23, 2003

  
TARIQ R. HAFIZ  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3623

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## Help via the Web

*Automotive Body Repair News*; Cleveland; Nov 2002; [John Yoswick](#);

**Volume:** 41**Issue:** 11**Start Page:** 70**ISSN:** 01920995**Subject Terms:** [Online information services](#)[Automotive repair services](#)[Paints](#)[Electronic commerce](#)[Online instruction](#)**Classification Codes:** **5250:** *Telecommunications systems & Internet communications***8304:** *Repair & maintenance services***9190:** *United States***Geographic Names:** United States

US

### Abstract:

WEB-BASED TOOLS ©**BASF** was the first of the paint companies out of the gate with a set of Web-based business analysis tools for shops, giving a demo of its **VisionPlus** Online (VPOL) at NACE 2000, in Orlando, Fla. and launching the offering the following year after more than 100 shops had been using it in its beta form. Now with more than 400 regular users, VPOL (<http://visionplus.basf.com>) can provide a broad array of data and tools to help shop owners improve their businesses.

### Full Text:

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### [Headnote]

Shop owners can increasingly look to the Internet for information, services from paint manufacturers. By John Yoswick, Contributing Editor



All the number of collision repair shops regularly using the Internet as part of their business grows, paint manufacturers are working to give shops plenty of reasons to visit their Web sites. Their efforts are, for the most part, getting good reviews from shop owners using the technology

Dave Graf, manager of Regal Auto Plaza Collision Center in Huntsville, Ala., says he has been ordering paint online for a couple years now. "It's really an efficient way of doing it, and it saves us money," he says.

Bob Sipos of Chardon Square CARSTAR in Chardon, Ohio, says the Web is a welcome tool because it provides "instantaneous feedback" from his paint provider. "I probably spend about 15 minutes a month entering data, and I immediately see how my numbers compare with the goals I entered and with other shops, including the top dogs," Sipos says.

The paint companies are quick to note that the move toward online ordering and support won't mean the end of your relationship with a jobber or paint rep.

"We don't see our Web-based tools and services as a replacement for our sales force or the business development managers we have out there helping our shop customers," says Bob Roewer, manager of eBusiness development for BASF's Automotive Refinish Regional Business Unit, in a statement echoed by other paint companies. "We see it as a way to use technology to offer even more support to shops. It gives both the shop and our people the tools and information needed to help us work together to help them improve their business."

Here's a look at some of what the paint company Web sites have to offer collision repair shops.

**PRODUCT AND TECHNICAL DAM** One of the true benefits of the Internet is the nearly instantaneous access it offers to current information. All of the paint company Web sites do a good job of making it easy to get information shops previously had to wait for a jobber or paint rep to supply.

Check out PPG's Web site

([www.PPGrefinish.com](http://www.PPGrefinish.com)) or Akzo Nobel's Web site ([www.AkzoNobelCarPefinishes.net](http://www.AkzoNobelCarPefinishes.net)), for example, to download Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all of those companies' products. Or visit the Sherwin-Williams Web site ([www.sherwin-automotive.com](http://www.sherwin-automotive.com)) for product and technical brochures, manuals and forms. The Valspar Web site ([www.valsparrefinish.com](http://www.valsparrefinish.com)) also includes information on its shop and painter certification programs, as well as its warranty program.

Running into problems in the paint booth? Many of the sites offer trouble-shooting advice. The Matrix System Automotive Finishes Web site ([www.matrixsystem.com](http://www.matrixsystem.com)), for example, explains causes and cures for everything from fisheyes and mottling to lifting and water blisters. The site also makes it easy to order free product samples.

**TRAINING INFORMATION:** The DuPont Performance Coatings (DPC) Web site ([www.performancecoatings.dupont.com](http://www.performancecoatings.dupont.com)) includes a training section that outlines training available for users of DPC product lines (which includes Standox and Spies Hecker).

"The site includes course descriptions, lists the prerequisites, and shows the dates and locations of classes," says Catherine Marchand, e-business manager for DPC. "Shops can then work with their DPC rep or jobber to register online."

Similarly, the Martin-Senour Web site ([www.martinsenour-autopaint.com](http://www.martinsenour-autopaint.com)) explains the nearly 20 courses the company offers. It also includes a current class schedule for its five training centers.

**COLOR FORMULATIONS:** Why wait for updates on color formulations when the latest information is immediately available via the Internet? [Sherwin-Williams](#), for example, has made color information available through a password-protected portion of its Web site for several years.

"It's updated daily at 5 a.m., so there's no waiting for the most current color information," says Todd McClure, manager of e-commerce for [Sherwin-Williams](#).

McClure says [Sherwin-Williams](#) is also piloting a program with about 20 shops that are using a "smart scale" tied to the Internet. As a painter mixes using the formulas called up via the Internet, the system monitors and adjusts, for example, for over-pouring. The system tracks this type of information and provides the shop owner with management reports to help improve paint department performance. McClure says the program is likely to be rolled out near the end of 2002.

[Akzo Nobel](#), too, offers its customers access to the most current color formulas through the "Mixit Online" section of its Web site.

In addition to color formulations, the DuPont Performance Coatings Web site includes other useful color news and information, Marchand says, including color styling, shading and color matching tips and information.

**ONLINE ORDERING:** Some of the paint companies have enabled shops to order paint online. [Sherwin-Williams](#)'s McClure says part of the benefit of mixing using online formulas is how easy it can make the ordering process.

"If you're pouring a toner and realize it's getting low, click on that toner in the formula and it can be added to your online shopping cart, and your order can be sent directly to the [Sherwin-Williams](#) store or jobber," he says.

[BASF](#) has also seen increasing traffic through its e-commerce site ([www.bodyshopmall.com](http://www.bodyshopmall.com)) that allows online ordering of paint and supplies. The site logged its 10,000th order about a year after its launch.

"Both the volume of orders and the rapid acceptance of this new technology by our collision repair facilities frankly exceeded our initial projections," says Al Winterman, [BASF](#) Automotive Refinish vice president. "It confirmed our thinking that our industry is moving toward online ordering and Web-based business analysis."

**WEB-BASED TOOLS** [BASF](#) was the first of the paint companies out of the gate with a set of Web-based business analysis tools for shops, giving a demo of its **VisionPlus** Online (VPOL) at NACE 2000, in Orlando, Fla. and launching the offering the following year after more than 100 shops had been using it in its beta form. Now with more than 400 regular users, VPOL (<http://visionplus.basf.com>) can provide a broad array of data and tools to help shop owners improve their businesses.

"With Vision Plus Online, you can enter your shop's data and see hundreds of benchmarking options, best practices and planning tools, all customized to your own business," says Guy Bargnes, director of marketing for [BASF](#)'s Automotive Refinish Regional Business Unit. "It's a set of tools that a shop can



use to measure and improve its operations and plan long-term financial strategies."

A BASF customer visiting the site can start by entering some basic information about his or her business to receive an instant "snapshot" of the business' performance, including key indicators and comparisons. The shop owner can use this report to pinpoint weaker areas in his or her business--and then find suggestions for improvement. Eleven aspects of the business--such as parts, sales and marketing, productivity, etc.--are evaluated. A click on any of these topics brings up a checklist of 10 to 40 'best practices' that the shop owner can use to improve the businesses' performance in that area, including ready-to-use forms or worksheets.

"Here's information to solve the shop owner's biggest headache, and he got to it at the second click," says BASF's Roewer. "He didn't have to dig through a 36-page report just to find some number that confirms what he thinks his biggest problem is, and still might not offer any solutions. He just says, 'This is the thing that's driving me nuts every day,' and click, here's the solution."

By entering monthly financial data, the shop owner can use VPOL over time to generate analyses, progress reports and industry comparisons. Roewer says new interactive worksheets that are being added to the system will help shops determine how different employee pay plans will impact their bottom lines, or how different shop staffing or layout designs will impact production levels.

"This stuff isn't magic-if you spent enough time on it, you could figure it out on your own," Roewer says. "VisionPlus Online just makes it easy and enables you to see how you're doing, how that performance compares, and how it could be improved."

Planning a new shop or a remodel? VPOL includes 15 model facility plans, ranging from 7,000-sq. ft. to more than 32,000-sq. ft. Roewer says BASF's facility layout service is efficient and economical thanks in large part to a Web-based checklist of owner needs and preferences.

"When planning a new building, shop owners often get a layout designed and then think of two or three things that require it to be changed," Roewer says. "That adds to the time and expense of the process. The VisionPlus Online planning checklist questions can help shop owners think about more of those types of things up front, to help them get the design they want sooner."

One of the enhancements being added to VPOL, Roewer says, will allow users to quickly determine at any time how much "capacity" they have to sell. A shop using the system has already entered information on the number and productivity of its technicians and the average amount of labor per repair order.

"So by entering just two more numbers-how many cars are in process and how many are standing by-at any time, the shop owner can find out, for example, that the shop has 90 labor hours left to sell in the next five days," Roewer says.

#### SHOP SEARCH ENGINES AND LINKS:

While the automotive refinishing sections of the paint companies' Web sites are aimed primarily at shops, some include information for consumers-including shop locator search engines at many of the sites. PPG's Web site, for example, helps consumers locate a nearby shop participating in its "Certified First" network.

Some of the sites make this service even more valuable to shops by enabling registered users to link their

shop's Web site to the listing within the paint company's shop locator.

ONLINE CLASSIFIEDS: "As we have developed our Web site, we tried to look at the more critical needs of our customers, and they told us they were always looking for good employees," says DuPont's Marchand. "We put a section-DPC JobTrack-on our site that's essentially a job clearinghouse. A shop can post a job opening whether it's for a painter or body tech or any kind of employee. And painters or other professionals can post their resumes. So it's a two-way clearinghouse."

Marchand says that resumes are posted, for example, for all recent graduates of the Universal Technical Institute, one of the country's leading trade schools.

Registered users can even set up the system to regularly check the database for job postings or resumes and automatically send them that information via e-mail.

Coaxing rather than coercion

All of the paint manufacturers say their goal is not to force shops to use the Internet for information and help but rather to make them want to do so.

"Many people are afraid it's going to be a productivity drain and not be an improvement, and they like and need the human interaction they've had with a person-a jobber or rep-they may have dealt with for many years," Marchand says. "I think as more shops give it a try, however, they will come to see it does offer benefits, and for some things it may be faster, better or less expensive than what they're doing now. We're trying to offer something that entices them to come and use the Internet on a regular basis because it has more value to them than doing things the old way."

#### [Sidebar]

Help Online

#### [Sidebar]

PPG

<http://www.PPGrefinish.com>

ⓈAkzo Nobel

<http://www.AkzoNobelCarRefinishes.net>

ⓈSherwin Williams

<http://www.sherwin-automotive.com>

Valspar

<http://www.valsparrefinish.com>

Matrix

<http://www.matrixsystem.com>

ⓈBASF

<http://visionplus.basf.com>

<http://www.bodyshopmall.com>

DuPont (incl. Standox and Spies Hecker)

<http://www.performancecoatings.dupont.com>

Martin Senour

<http://www.martinsenour-autopaint.com>

**[Author note]**

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03867141 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)  
Paint company value-added programs & services  
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It's been a year-and-a-half since the concept of banner programs--whether paint company, distributor or independently sourced--was first highlighted. (See Banner Mania, Dec. 1994). Since that time, virtually all of the paint manufacturers have been busy either developing new value-added programs or overhauling the existing ones; in some cases both. While all of the paint companies offer value added services, not all are marketed under a specific banner program. Therefore, the purpose of this compilation is not solely to highlight the banner, but to provide a glimpse into the depth of non-product related services available to the Canadian autobody repair trade. Without a doubt, the paint manufacturers realize that they are not just selling refinish products to the shops any more. And as the total autobody repair market continues to decline, it's the use of these added services that have the potential to help a bodyshop remain in business and stay profitable.

Those at the paint company level who are involved with the marketing of these value-added programs, appear to be of one mind as to the characteristics of the shop owners/managers who take advantage of the programs. ``A keen interest in maximizing business potential and profitability through labor productivity improvements,'' is how Georgina Sweeney, marketing service manager at PPG Canada, defines one of the characteristics. ``They're looking for every opportunity to set themselves apart from the rest of the pack,'' cites Patrick Laurence, director of sales and marketing at Sherwin-Williams. ``Forward-thinking'', ``leaders in their markets'', and ``eager to grow into the next century'', are some of the phrases used by Norma Boal, of American Standox's added value marketing department. (At press time, \*BASF\* Canada was in the process of re-engineering its value-added service offerings under a banner known as \*Vision\* \*Plus\*. Spies Hecker Canada is also evaluating its value-added services, possibly under a banner, or separately. Information pertaining to value-added services from these two companies will be profiled in a later issue of BODYSHOP).

#### AKZO NOBEL ACOAT SELECTEDPHILOSOPHY

Acoat selected is designed to assist today's collision repair center managers in refining skills in productivity enhancement, strategic planning and marketing plan implementation. The program is consultant driven and tailored to meet the needs of shop owners who seek to differentiate their businesses through identifying and meeting goals in productivity, efficiency, customer service, market share and profitability.

#### CANDIDATES

For a shop owner to enter the Acoat selected program as an Associate, he/she must meet strict criteria set for materials and equipment, office, warranty, education, and time and resources. Some of the specifics include:

- use Akzo/Sikkens paint exclusively.

- have a well lit, attractive and clean workshop.

- have a pressurized spraybooth.

- have equipment capable of making multiple pulls, a 4-point measuring system and an accurate source of vehicle dimensions.

- have a 4-wheel alignment rack or quality sublet available.

- have a computerized management system that will provide automated estimates, job cost capacity/employee efficiencies, departmental sales analysis, plus a P-page logic estimating system.

- provide a written lifetime warranty on paint and labor.

- participate in the Akzo Product Assurance Plan.

- be willing to have recent repair orders subjected to a CSI audit

I-CAR technical staff must have technical education plan in place to attain Gold Class standard or equivalent.

Upon completing the Associate phase (a minimum of one year), members may gain full access to the Partner program. Partner status requires further criteria be met, including the attendance of two 3-day seminars, submission of information and attendance in 20 Groups, annual business plans, and ongoing CSI program.

#### COSTS

Both the initial and yearly fee for Acoat selected are \$6,800.

#### BENEFITS

The emphasis of the program is shop management and business development. Acoat selected members gain admittance to training seminars and networking events. The educational curriculum consists of in-depth, yet practical, two-to three-day seminars conducted in either a classroom setting or a shop environment. The cornerstone of networking is the biannual 20 Group. These are meetings of 10 to 20 non-competitive shops who come together to share ideas and create shop specific action plans.

Each member shop is assigned an Akzo Nobel business development manager who acts as a consultant. The consultant's roles are to provide an objective outsider's view of the operation, assist in setting short- and long-term objectives, and help facilitate the implementation of formulated action plans.

To speed the implementation of ideas, the Acoat selected program offers more than 115 industry-specific tools classified in the following key areas of business management: finance (analysis, forecasting, budgeting), human resources, sales and marketing, production scheduling, parts and materials control, safety, strategic planning, and standardization of procedures. These templates are customized by the consultant to meet the specific needs of each member shop.

#### OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

Outside of the Acoat selected program, Akzo Nobel offers the following services to its customers: facility planning and design, facility analysis, information technology, technical training, sales and management training, Services Conference, Mixit.  
INFORMATION CONTACT

Michel Guerette, business development manager, Akzo Nobel. Call (416) 674-6633 or 1-800-361-4655.

#### AMERICAN STANDOX PARTNERSHIP IN EXCELLENCE (PIE)

##### PHILOSOPHY

American Standex's Partnership in Excellence (PIE) program is a ``customer-oriented and customer-driven added value partnership'' for bodyshops. PIE is designed around the principle of networking with fellow Standex users under a common image of advanced professionalism, innovative management and business excellence. Counterpart programs have been in effect in number of European countries Standex serves since the late-'80s.

##### CANDIDATES

Membership in PIE is not based on volume although bodyshops will have to use Standex products exclusively. Application for membership in PIE is open to the full customer base. On-site evaluations by Standex personnel to assure bodyshops meet the membership criteria is a requirement. Criteria focuses on technical requirements, marketing requirements certification and evidence of ongoing training.

##### COST

There is a one-time membership fee of \$1,250 and annual renewal costs of \$625 are involved.

##### BENEFITS

A key component of PIE is user group weekends to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the staging of seminars for successful business growth.

PIE is to connect each shop's business team with services such as marketing programs, management strategy and training programs, computerized shop management and financial analysis, market research, CSI, bodyshop design services, frequent buyer program and the Standex Lifetime Warranty.

Some specific points to a couple of these services include:

1. Business plan creation--PIE management consultants are trained to help a shop:

analyze its business

research its competitors

recognize current industry trends

understand its market

identify the key strengths and weaknesses of the business

outline shop operations, and

plan for the future.

2. Frequent Buyer Program--Every time a PIE member makes a Standox paint

purchase, he is earning redeemable 'Bowtie Bucks' (based on 2% of the paint purchase) towards any or all of the following PIE services:

training courses and seminars (both product & paint, and management & marketing)

promotional items and other items that contribute to the development of the business, and

trips and tours.

#### CONTACT

Norma Boal, Added Value Marketing, American Standox Inc., Plymouth Michigan. Call (313) 416-2147.

#### DUPONT CANADA ASSURANCE OF QUALITY

#### PHILOSOPHY

The Assurance of Quality (AOQ) program is designed to help collision repair shops promote their business and services in the following areas:

helps turn more estimates into repair orders

equips them with the tools to attract new customers

helps build repeat and referral business

''Our main objective is to help make our customers more successful,'' says Wayne Hazelton, DuPont's refinish marketing manager. ''The high public awareness of the DuPont name and the strong reputation it enjoys is the foundation of our marketing support program and we encourage our customers to take full advantage of it.''

#### CANDIDATES

Shop candidates for the AOQ program must be reputable and provide good quality work. Employees must take the appropriate training and the shop itself must have a presentable customer reception area.

#### COSTS

There is an initial fee of \$418 for the AOQ program.

#### BENEFITS

Program-specific material for AOQ consists of a reception area videotape, radio demo commercial, advertising advisory kit, clock, window decals, consumer leaflets and display easel, 'in case of accident' leaflet, care folder, consumer wall poster, plastic tacker sign and (optionally) interior and exterior lit signs.

#### OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

Other value-added services outside the AOQ program include DuPont's warranted paint systems, a variety of technical and shop management training, third-party financial analysis and benchmarking service, shop layout and design services, a Profiting from Environmental Responsibility program, a national toll-free customer help line staffed by refinish experts, plus several leading edge, one-day Body-shop Management Training courses:

1. Building Your Business in the '90s--teaches how to bring more business into the shop; form better relationships with insurance companies; find, keep and motivate good people.

2. Smart 1--teaches how to run a successful repair shop by building a marketing plan; positioning the business against the competition; running the business by the numbers; and maximizing production efficiency.

3. Smart Money--designed to give the financial tools, skill and strategies necessary to improve profitability and win in today's marketplace.

#### CONTACT

DuPont's toll-free Customer Help Line. Call 1-800-668-6945.

#### ICI AUTOCOLOR PARTNERSHIP PLUS

##### PHILOSOPHY

The Partnership Plus program is a collection of value added programs and services designed to improve business development, efficiency and control for bodyshop owners and managers. Partnership Plus offers a menu of programs and services that allow owners and managers a choice of tools to improve the profitability of the business.

The tools offered under the banner fall into three categories: programs and services, personalized inshop consulting, and Integrated Shop Management training. Each of these tools is designed to improve an aspect of the facility's business development (getting customers into the shop), efficiency (getting customers' work through the shop), and control (achieving customer satisfaction and profitability).

ICI Autocolor believes that it is no longer enough to be merely a paint supplier. It must become a business supplier. Only by working together can bodyshops, distributors and ICI Autocolor remain successful in today's competitive market.

##### CANDIDATES

ICI Autocolor states that the best candidates for Partnership Plus are bodyshop professionals who have a desire to invest in, and grow, their business. A 'qualification checklist & enrollment form' that details recommended standards for cleanliness, equipment, safety and health, product and business philosophies is filled out by the interested



bodyshop. Partnership Plus members must use ICI Autocolor 2K and/or Aquabase product systems. The Integrated Shop Management courses are offered to any shop, including those who use competitive brands of paint.

#### COSTS

There is no sign-up fee to join the program. Members pay for courses and services as they use them. They are also encouraged to take advantage of courses and services to meet their own needs to improve. There is no minimum or maximum usage of the services.

#### BENEFITS

As a member of the program, bodyshops receive several benefits for no sign-up fee including; reduced pricing on Integrated Shop Management courses, reduced pricing on program materials and forms, exclusive business services (profitability monitoring, shop layout and design, CSI, consulting), program manuals, '12 Month Development Plan', membership plaque, profit potential analysis, and toll-free support.

#### OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

Partnership Plus offers a menu of programs and services that allows bodyshop owners and managers a choice of tools to improve shop profitability. The tools offered under the banner fall into three categories: programs and services, personalized in-shop consulting, and Integrated Shop Management training; each of which is designed to improve an aspect of the facility's business development, efficiency and control.

#### CONTACT

To register or for more information on Partnership Plus, call 1-800-227-7516, extension P-L-U-S ((7587)). For information on the Integrated Shop Management classes and consulting services offered under this program, call 1-800-708--PLUS. Both of these numbers are staffed from 8am-5pm EST, Monday to Friday, and have a 24 hour answering system.

#### PPG CANADA MAXIMUM VELOCITY PERFORMANCE (MVP)

#### PHILOSOPHY

To help collision repair shops improve productivity, increase profitability and achieve Maximum Velocity Performance. ``The MVP program is not merely a gimmick to sell paint,'' says Tom Craig, vice-president of PPG Automotive Refinish Group. ``On the contrary, since PPG has a vested interest in seeing our customers grow and prosper, our goal is to provide the kind of in-depth consultation and support required to make a significant contribution to the success of our collision repair partners.''

#### CANDIDATES

Candidates for the MVP program are screened and selected by the PPG Canada management staff. There are three phases to the program. Phase 1 is open of all interested bodyshops. For phase 2 and phase 3, shops must use PPG refinish products as well as a list of PPG recommended products in order to be able to offer the lifetime refinish guarantee.

#### COSTS

No costs are involved for the MVP Productivity Analysis or the Certification Program.

#### BENEFITS

A major element of the program is the MVP Productivity Analysis, which

generates hard data on the performance of selected bodyshops and compares that data with benchmarks PPG has developed by working with the MVP shops across North America (actual information pertaining to individual bodyshops is kept strictly confidential).

The analysis begins with an initial consultation followed by a thorough evaluation of the total bodyshop operation, including analysis of metal shop, paint department, body repair and paint equipment and personnel, plus a sales and profit evaluation, safety check-up and a critique of the shop's overall marketing program and image.

Data compiled during this evaluation enables PPG productivity experts to calculate critical measurements judged key to analyzing productivity, such as percent of gross profit on labor sales, gross profit per technician clock hour, and refinish material gross profit as a percentage of refinish labor sales. In all, 29 primary productivity measurements are taken of a bodyshop's performance, forming the basis of total productivity analysis where PPG consultants develop suggestions for improving productivity. Phase 2 and Phase 3 evaluation is even more detailed.

Acceptance into the MVP Program also includes enrollment in the Shop Certification Program, which will enable the bodyshop to offer a lifetime guarantee (valid to original purchaser only) on any paint work done according to PPG's certification standards. The certification program also offers technician training, marketing support, a technician's hotline and other benefits.

#### OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

Other aspects of the MVP Program include management training seminars, bodyshop design and layout service, free radio and television commercials and ad slicks, image brochures and posters, indoor and outdoor illuminated and non-illuminated signage, and a shop operations manual.

#### INFORMATION CONTACT

MVP Headquarters. Call (216) 572-6199.

#### SHERWIN-WILLIAMS A-PLUS

#### PHILOSOPHY

Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes has created A-Plus to form an international network of shops that reflect the highest standards in the collision repair industry.

#### CANDIDATES

Membership is reserved for shops that meet specific and fairly extensive membership criteria. Sherwin-Williams asks that A-Plus shops meet the following requirements:

Use Sherwin-Williams Premium Undercoat System and Ultra System basecoat/clearcoats as the main refinishing system according to S-W recommendations.  
Comply with all federal, provincial and local regulations pertaining to bodyshops.

Employ qualified technicians who are I-CAR or equivalent certified in refinish and body repair responsibilities.

Provide an ongoing employee training program by using various training sources available through I-CAR or Sherwin-Williams.

Use the following:

--A 4-point clamping system to secure vehicles while making structural repairs.

--Electrical and hydraulic pulling equipment appropriate to the service offered.

--Equipment capable of making three-dimensional measurements.

--Current dimensional guides appropriate to the vehicle being repaired.

--A computerized estimating system.

Use appropriate welding equipment that meets vehicle manufacturers' requirements.

Replace or restore a vehicle's mechanical and structural components to their pre-accident condition to ensure vehicle integrity, durability and safety.

Replace all safety devices and restore vehicle corrosion protection to manufacturer's recommendations.

Provide at least a minimum 1-year written limited warranty on all repairs.

Maintain a clean, professional environment for receiving customers.

Meeting qualifications and use the Sherwin-Williams A-Plus Lifetime Guarantee Program.

Monitor the shop's customer service index through a third-party service such as Sherwin-Williams' Customer Satisfaction program.

Adhere to the Code of Ethics issued by the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) and endorsed by S-W.

#### COSTS

For a one-time membership fee of \$675, A-Plus members gain access to all of the products and services with the Sherwin-Williams Advantage Programs. This fee includes training programs and merchandising elements as well as significant discounts on additional programs.

#### BENEFITS

After joining, A-Plus members receive free the following resources that are designed to help maximize shop performance, both operationally and financially:

bodyshop analysis

Advantage marketing program

The Benchmark customer service index program

special discounts in the Collision Repair Design Service

Advantage Shop Management Training course

Collision Repair Industry Insight monthly newsletter

access to Insight's I-NET electronic information system.  
brochures, signage and assorted merchandising items.

#### OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

A-Plus members are also entitled to special discounts and services such as 20% off the Collision Repair Design Service and the Benchmark Operational Analysis Program. If a shop does not qualify to be an A-Plus member based on the required membership criteria, the Advantage programs can still be offered to that shop on an a la carte basis.

#### CONTACT

Patrick Laurence, director of sales and marketing, Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes. Phone (905) 890-1600 or fax (905) 890-0462.COMPARISON CHART

#### GENERAL Company

Program Name	ICI Autocolor	PPG Canada
	Partnership Plus	Maximum Velocity Performance (MVP)
Date Established	1995	1995
Initial Fee	\$0	\$0
Yearly Renewal Fee or Percentage	\$0	\$0
Required Shop Criteria	Yes	Phase 1--No Phase 2 & 3--Yes

#### MARKETING

Program Specific		
Point of Sale Material	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Exterior Signs	No	Yes
Initial Fee Includes		
Basic POS Material/Signage	Yes	Yes
Newspaper/Yellow		
Pages Ad Slicks	Yes	Yes
Manufacturer Supported		
Co-op Advertising	No	No
Sample Press Releases	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Marketing Training	Yes	Yes
Direct Insurance Company		
Marketing Program	No	No

#### MANAGEMENT

Third-Party CSI Program	Yes	Yes
Third-Party Financial		
Analysis/Benchmarking		
Service	Yes	No (in-house)
Program Specific		
Management Training	Yes	Yes
Shop Layout/		
Design Service	Yes	Yes

Buying Group/  
Program Partners  
COMPARISON CHART -- continued  
GENERAL  
Company

No

No

American  
Standex

Sherwin-Williams  
Automotive  
Finishes

Program Name	Partnership in Excellence (PIE)	A-Plus
Date Established	Dec. 1995	Dec. 1994
Initial Fee	\$1,250	\$675
Yearly Renewal Fee or Percentage	\$625	\$0
Required Shop Criteria	Yes	Yes
MARKETING		
Program Specific		
Point of Sale Material	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Exterior Signs	Yes	Yes
Initial Fee Includes		
Basic POS Material/Signage	Yes	Yes
Newspaper/Yellow		
Pages Ad Slicks	Yes	Yes
Manufacturer Supported		
Co-op Advertising	Yes	No
Sample Press Releases	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Marketing Training	Yes	Yes
Direct Insurance Company		
Marketing Program	Yes	No
MANAGEMENT		
Third-Party CSI Program	Yes	Yes
Third-Party Financial		
Analysis/Benchmarking		
Service	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Management Training	Yes	Yes
Shop Layout/		
Design Service	Yes	Yes
Buying Group/		
Program Partners	Yes	No

COMPARISON CHART -- continued  
GENERAL  
Company

DuPont  
Canada

Akzo  
Nobel

Program Name	Assurance of Quality (AOQ)	Acoat Selected
Date Established	1999	Nov. 1994 (in Canada)
Initial Fee	\$418	\$6,800
Yearly Renewal Fee or Percentage	\$0	\$6,800
Required Shop Criteria	Yes	Yes
MARKETING		
Program Specific		
Point of Sale Material	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Exterior Signs	Yes	Yes
Initial Fee Includes		
Basic POS Material/Signage	Yes	Yes
Newspaper/Yellow		
Pages Ad Slicks	Yes	Yes

Manufacturer Supported		
Co-op Advertising	No	No
Sample Press Releases	Yes	Yes
Program Specific		
Marketing Training	Yes	Yes
Direct Insurance Company		
Marketing Program	No	Yes
MANAGEMENT		
Third-Party CSI Program	No	Yes
Third-Party Financial		
Analysis/Benchmarking		
Service	No	No (in-house)
Program Specific		
Management Training	Yes	Yes
Shop Layout/		
Design Service	No	Yes
Buying Group/		
Program Partners	No	No

SPECIAL FEATURES: illustration; table

COMPANY NAMES: PPG Canada; \*BASF\* Canada; Spies Hecker Canada; ICI  
Autocolor; PPG Automotive Refinish Group; Sherwin-Williams Automotive  
Finishes; A-Plus

TRADE NAME(S): Sherwin-Williams Premium Undercoat System; Ultra System